

*National
Recreation
Trails*

*Caring for
America's
Community
of Trails*



The story of the American trail is as old as the story of America itself. Trails were the highways of early America, a route to a destination. Today, trails are again becoming an important part of America's landscape for recreation, conservation, health and transportation. They connect people to each other, to the land and to our shared histories and cultures. The National Recreation Trail program recognizes and promotes trails from across the country, which exemplify this tradition.

Overlooking the Bright Angel NRT, Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona



What is the National Recreation Trail program?

The National Trail System Act of 1968

(16 USC 1241-51) authorizes creation of a national trail system comprised of national recreation trails (NRTs), national scenic trails, national historic trails and side or connecting trails. National scenic trails and national historic trails may only be designated by an act of Congress. National Recreation Trails may be designated by the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture in response to an application from the trail's managing agency or organization to recognize exemplary trails of local and regional significance.

National Recreation Trails provide for numerous outdoor recreation activities in a variety of urban, rural and remote areas. By 1999, over 800 trails, available for public use and ranging from a 1/4 mile to 485 miles, had been designated as NRTs on federal, state, local and privately owned lands.

North Umpqua NRT, Tioga Section, Bureau of Land Management, Rosewood District, Oregon



Trails for All Americans

In 1990, the National Trails Agenda Project created a task force of 15 trails leaders who solicited advice from a broad cross section of the trails community nationwide. The resulting “Trails for All Americans” report called for a vast, interconnected system of private, local, state and federal trails linking neighborhoods, communities, towns and cities, businesses, parks and states throughout the country. According to the report, “most Americans would live and work within 15 minutes of this system.”

*Freedom NRT, Boston National Historic Park,
Boston, Massachusetts*



The National Recreation Trail program supports NRTs with an array of benefits, including promotion, technical assistance, networking and access to funding. Its goal is to realize the vision of “Trails for All Americans” by promoting the use and care of existing trails and stimulating the development of new trails throughout the United States.

What are the benefits of becoming a National Recreation Trail?

National Recreation Trails benefit from the prestige and increased visibility of being a part of the National Trails System. The National Park Service provides the local trail manager with a press kit to facilitate publicity and build support for the trail and its designation as an NRT. After submitting a successful application, the trail manager receives a letter and certificate signed by either the Secretary of the Interior or the USDA Forest Service Regional Forester delegated by the Secretary of Agriculture, designating the trail as an NRT. This entitles the manager to request the use of the NRT logo in appropriate settings and trail publications. New designations are announced annually by the Secretary of the Interior as part of the American Hiking Society’s nationwide celebration of National Trails Day held on the first Saturday in June.

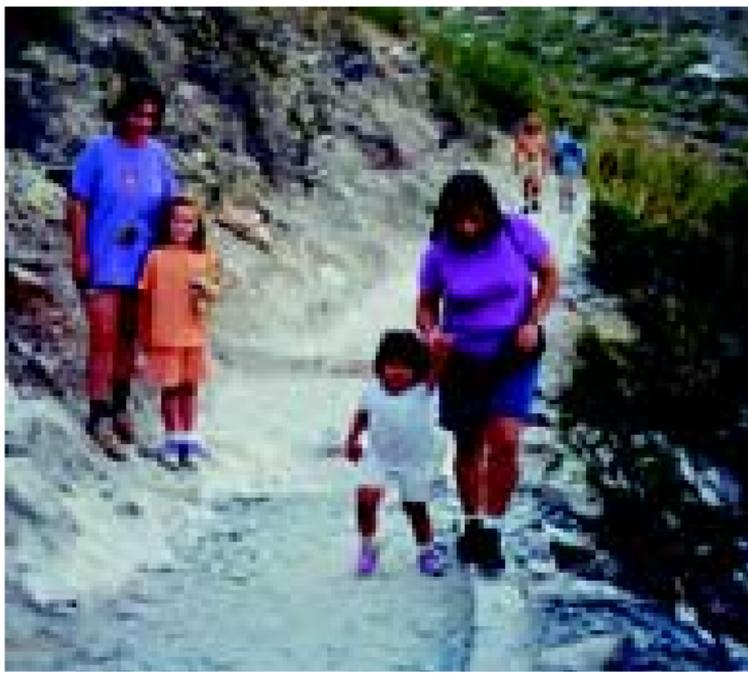
*Arapaho Pass NRT, Roosevelt National Forest,
Fort Collins, Colorado*



All NRTs are listed on the NRT National Registry of Trails website at <http://www.americantrails.org/nationalrecreationtrails> which includes descriptive information, maps and pictures for trail users. Trail managers provide information about their NRTs for the site and keep it up-to-date. Other benefits include:

- access to technical assistance from NRT program partners;
- an NRT newsletter with program updates, newsworthy activities, technical information, and innovative solutions to trail issues from around the country;
- networking and training opportunities;
- assistance with recognition and special events highlighting the trail;
- letters of support for grants, partnership development and trail protection efforts; and
- access to funding opportunities available from the NRT Program partners. Trails with NRT designation are eligible to be considered for support from the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management and USDA Forest Service Challenge Cost Share Programs. Some states also consider NRT designation as an additional factor in applying for Recreational Trails Program, Transportation Enhancements and other funding administered through the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration.

*Summit NRT,
Squaw Peak,
Phoenix, Arizona*



Where do I go for more information on National Recreation Trails?

A good first step is to visit the NRT website at <http://www.americantrails.org/nationalrecreationtrails>. From there, you can contact the NRT coordinator at the National Park Service, which is responsible for overall coordination of the NRT program. You may also write, call, or fax:

National Recreation Trail Coordinator
National Park Service
Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance
Program
1849 C Street, NW, MS 3622
Washington DC 20240

Phone: (202) 565-1200

Fax: (202) 565-1204

E-mail: nrt@nps.gov

*Shockaloe Horse NRT, Bienville National Forest,
Jackson, Mississippi*



Who can apply for National Recreation Trail designation?

Any public or private trail manager, operating a trail that meets the definition and criteria below may apply for NRT designation.



Allegheny National Forest, Warren, Pennsylvania

Definition of a trail

A trail is a travel way established either through construction or use and is passable by at least one or more of the following, including but not limited to: foot traffic, stock, watercraft, bicycles, in-line skates, wheelchairs, cross-country skis, off-road recreation vehicles such as motorcycles, snowmobiles, all-terrain and 4-wheel drive vehicles. Roads and highways suitable for passenger car travel are not eligible for NRT designation. Other programs are more appropriate for their recognition such as the National Scenic Byways Program (see www.byways.org or call 800-429-9297).



Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath NRT, Cuyahoga Valley NRA, Brecksville, Ohio

Criteria

1) The trail must be open to public use and designed, constructed and maintained to the trail managing agency's standards, in keeping with the use anticipated. Managers of trails with state-of-the-art design and management are especially encouraged to apply for NRT designation.

2) The trail manager is willing to certify that the trail will be open for public use for at least 10 consecutive years after designation.

3) NRT designation must be supported by the landowner(s).

Bizz Johnson NRT, Susanville, California/Stan Bales, Bureau of Land Management



How do I apply for National Recreation Trail designation?

The trail managing agency is responsible for submitting the application along with supporting letters, maps, photos and other documentation.

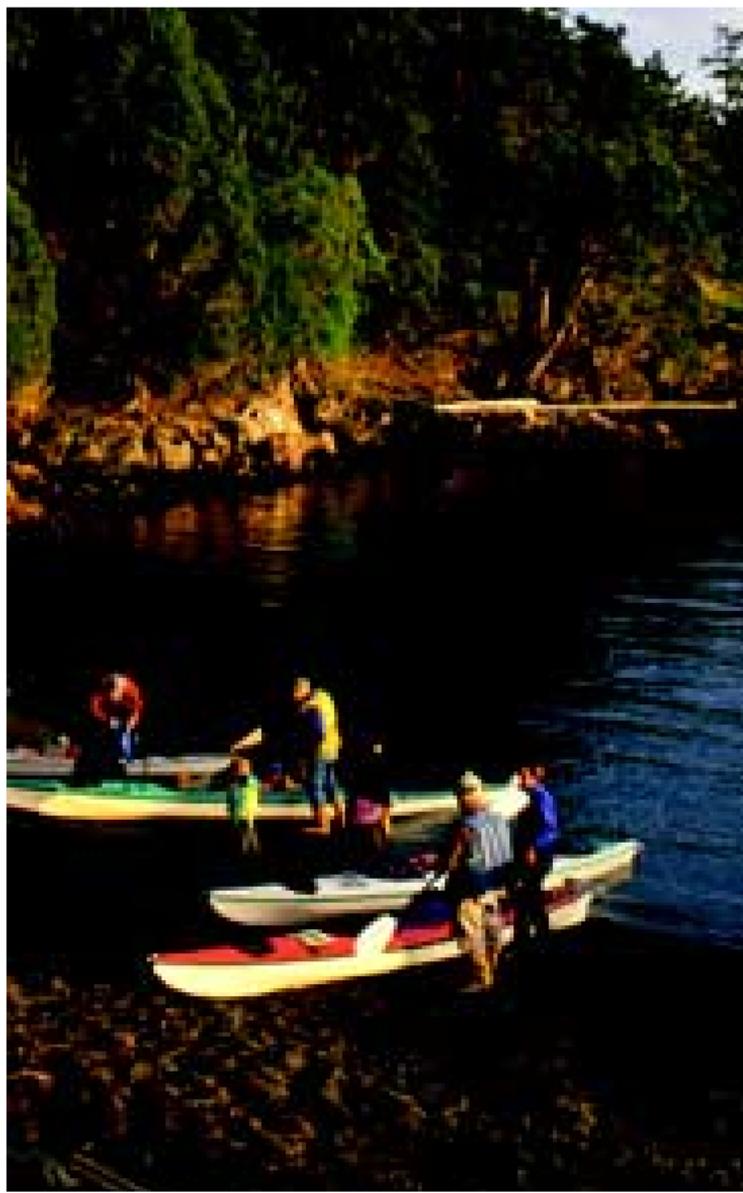


*Grag Crest NRT,
Grand Mesa
National Forest,
Delta, Colorado*

If your trail is on federal land administered by the Secretary of Agriculture:

Contact your agency's National Recreation Trail Coordinator for application information. The Secretary of Agriculture has delegated authority for designating NRTs on land administered by that department, (National Forests, National Grasslands, and National Recreation Areas) to the Forest Service which has developed its own designation process.

*Cascadia Marine NRT, San Juan Islands, Doe Bay,
Washington/©Joel Rogers*



If your trail is on other federal land (not administered by the Department of Agriculture) or on state, local or private land: Contact the National Recreation Trails Coordinator. The Secretary of the Interior is the designating official for NRTs on all other federal lands and on state, local government and private lands, and has delegated responsibility to the National Park Service for the overall administration of the NRT program under that department's jurisdiction. Please address requests for applications and assistance to the following:

National Recreation Trail Coordinator
National Park Service
Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance
Program
1849 C Street, NW, MS 3622
Washington DC 20240

Phone: (202) 565-1200

Fax: (202) 565-1204

E-mail: nrt@nps.gov

Otispikie Wilderness Nature NRT, Fire Island National Seashore, Patchogue, New York





Canalway NRT, Erie Canal, Adams Basin, New York

National Recreation Trail applications are processed by both departments on an annual cycle. Applications must be submitted by November 1 to the appropriate NRT Program contact for the designation to be announced during the following National Trails Day celebration in June. Interested trail managers should begin the application process by September 1 to ensure they meet the November 1 deadline.

NRT Partners

National Recreation Trails are jointly administered by the National Park Service and USDA Forest Service, with support from the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U. S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, American Trails, American Hiking Society, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, American Recreation Coalition, and the National Association of State Trail Administrators.

Back cover: Dorr Mountain NRT, Acadia National Park, Maine

*Front cover: Silver Creek Canyon NRT, Sibliimity, Oregon/
Jerry Robertson, Oregon State Parks*

